

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 077948

FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SIDNEY SOBER, USDEL PREPCON

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE, INFO AMMAN, TEL AVIV, APRIL
7, FROM JIDDA RPTD TO YOU:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 2485

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: SA, IS, MARR

SUBJ: SAG CLAIMS ISRAELI OVERFLIGHTS OF SAUDI TERRITORY

1. DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER MOHAMMED MAS'UD ORALLY PASSED
TO DCM APRIL 3 FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON ALLEGED ISRAELI
OVERFLIGHTS; SOURCE OF REPORTS WAS COMMANDER OF NORTHERN
REGION, AND REPORTS BASED UPON OBSERVATIONS MADE IN
VICINITY OF MAQNA (ON THE GULF OF AQABA): (A) ON THURSDAY,
MARCH 20 AT 1620 TWO UNIDENTIFIED AIRCRAFT FLEW OVER
SAUDI COASTAL AREA FROM SOUTH TO NORTH; WHILE OVER MAQNA
THEY BROKE THE SOUND BARRIER; (B) TEN MINUTES LATER SAME
DAY ANOTHER AIRCRAFT COMING FROM DIRECTION OF TIRAN
PASSED OVER MAQNA, ALSO HEADING NORTH; (C) ON
FRIDAY, MARCH 21, AT 1800 HOURS ANOTHER AIRCRAFT PEN-
ETRATED SAUDI AIR SPACE OVER PENINSULA SHAYKH HUMAYD
(MOUTH OF GULF OF AQABA) AND FLEW ON SOUTH AT A LOW
ALTITUDE.

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2. COMMENT: (A) IT'S BEEN A YEAR OR MORE SINCE MAS'UD

LAST BROUGHT REPORTS IAF INCURSION INTO SAUDI AIR SPACE TO OUR ATTENTION. WITH SUSPENSION OF SECRETARY'S PEACE MISSION, SAUDIS ARE NOW PROBABLY MORE ALERT TO EVENTS ON THEIR QUASI-BORDER WITH ISRAEL. MAS'UD WAS NOT ASKING THAT WE TAKE ANY ACTION, BUT MAY SPEAK TO US A LITTLE MORE URGENTLY IF OVERFLIGHTS CONTINUE. (B) SPEAKING MORE GENERALLY, THE IAF MAY BECOME MORE INTERESTED IN SAUDI ARABIA THAN IT HAS IN THE PAST. A NEW 9,000-10,000 FOOT RUNWAY OPENED AT TABUK IN THE PAST FEW DAYS, AND THE SAUDIS ARE RUSHING CONSTRUCTION ON BARRACKS AND OTHER HOUSING SO THAT THE LIGHTNING SQUADRON CAN BE MOVED TO TABUK IN JUNE OR JULY. (THESE ARE PURELY DEFENSIVE FIGHTER-INTERCEPTORS WITH NO STRIKE CAPABILITY). WE NOTE ALSO THAT ISRAELI COF GENERAL GUR WHILE TALKING TO A GROUP OF U.S. CONGRESSMEN RECENTLY INCLUDED SAUDI ARABIA TOGETHER WITH EGYPT AND SYRIA AS A POTENTIAL AIR FORCE DANGER TO ISREAL. (TEL AVIV'S A-38). AKINS UNQUOTE.

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